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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 005239

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TAGS: [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KIRF](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: A/S SAUERBREY BRIEFED ON CHINA-TIBET NEGOTIATIONS

Classified By: A/PolCouns Atul Keshap for reasons 1.4 (B,D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: During a November 9-11 visit to Dharmasala, Population, Refugee, and Migration (PRM) Assistant Secretary Ellen Sauerbrey met the Kashag (Tibetan Executive Cabinet) of the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). The Kalon Tripa (Prime Minister) Professor Samdhong Rinpoche told A/S Sauerbrey that the CTA is committed to the Middle-Way approach, that there is a threat to dilution of Tibetan identity due to the Han influx into Tibet, the Chinese attempt to influence selection of Lamas will be resisted, and that a telecom revolution in Tibet was having positive impact on the flow of information concerning political developments relating to Tibet. End Summary.

#### The Middle-Way Approach

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12. (C) Tibetan Prime Minister Samdhong Rinpoche thanked the American people for their consistent humanitarian support and the Congressional Gold Medal President Bush presented to the Dalai Lama. Rinpoche also reaffirmed the CTA's commitment to the Middle-Way Approach, introduced by the Dalai Lama in 1988, as a solution to the Tibet question. Under this plan, Tibet would not seek complete independence, but would become a self-governing political entity in association with the People's Republic of China (PRC).

#### The Need for Political Will

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13. (C) Rinpoche opined that in order to reach a solution to the Tibet question, the PRC needed political will, which remains out of reach because the PRC is not committed to resolving the Tibet issue politically. Rinpoche remarked that the large influx of Han Chinese into Tibet threatens to eliminate Tibetan culture through dilution. This is the solution the PRC would prefer, Rinpoche claimed. He remained concerned that the number of Han Chinese migrating to Tibet would only increase after the 2008 Olympics in Beijing and lamented that the Tibetans are becoming a minority in their own land. He further explained that the local Tibetan

population is disadvantaged in the workplace linguistically, since the new Han-dominated economy favors Mandarin speakers and most Tibetans do not speak Mandarin.

The Ball is in China,s court  
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¶4. (C) Rinpoche also offered feedback on the recently competed sixth round of negotiations with the PRC. During the sixth round, the PRC demanded the Dalai Lama acknowledge as fact that Tibet has always been historically a part of China -- something the Dalai Lama cannot accept. The PRC proposal would also create 13 separate autonomous regions instead of a single, unified Tibetan autonomous region. To this, Rinpoche responded, &The people of Tibet are one, so the region should also be one. Since the 16th century, all Tibetans have been under one rule.8 He concluded that the &the process of dialogue has reached a critical stage and the next step will be determined by the PRC.8

Religious Freedom in China and Tibet  
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¶5. (C) A/S Sauerbrey expressed concern over China,s recent attempt to control Tibetans through the Lamas. Rinpoche assured her that the CTA and Tibetan people would resist any Chinese attempts to influence the Lama system. (Note: On September 1, the PRC enacted an order stating that a reincarnated lama can only be chosen in conjunction with the PRC religious bureau authority's approval. End Note.). She stated the USG,s commitment to raising awareness about this issue, as it is a blatant restriction of religious freedom.

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The Impact of the Telecom Revolution in Tibet  
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¶6. (C) The future of Tibet, Rinpoche emphasized, rested in the independent media and increased access to information in PRC-controlled Tibet. He explained that during a particularly violent PRC crackdown of monasteries in Lhasa last year, increased cell phone use allowed Tibetans in Dharamsala to hear and receive up-to-date information on the violence. Voice of America and Free Asia radio gave Tibetans access to radio broadcasts. Rinpoche reported that many Tibetans listened and watched on October 17 as the Dalai Lama was presented with the Congressional Gold Medal by President Bush.

¶7. (C) Comment: The increased access to information and communication between the Tibetan community-in-exile and in Tibet is encouraging. The information technology will increase global awareness on the condition of Tibetans in Tibet and could have a positive impact on future China-Tibet negotiations. End Comment.

¶8. (U) A/S Sauerbrey did not clear this cable.  
MULFORD